

The Sidewalk

Merchandise Mart - the world's largest commercial building - goes green

Want to know what 4.2 million square feet of sustainability looks like? Take a stroll through [the newly LEED-certified Merchandise Mart](#).

On Nov. 6, Chicago's Merchandise Mart announced that it had received [the U.S. Green Building Council's \(USGBC\)](#) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification for existing buildings. The USGBC is a leading industry non-profit and its LEED certification is the nationally accepted benchmark for design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

Among [Merchandise Mart's new green features](#): a comprehensive recycling program, low VOC (volatile organic compound) paints, products and building materials, motion-activated lighting, recycled paper for all business purposes, a hybrid car available for tenants and employees 24 hours a day and retrofitted energy-efficient and low wattage fixtures and lights wherever possible.

A spokeswoman for Merchandise Mart told me the Mart hopes to be an example for Chicago and other cities across the country. If a building second only to the Pentagon in terms of size can go green, she said, any building can do it.

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